REASONS

Againſt the Repealing the

ACTS of PARLIAMENT

Concerning the

TEST.

Humbly offered to the Conſideration of the *Members* of *both Houſes*, at their next Meeting

On the 28th of *April* 1687.

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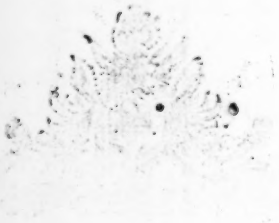

REASONS against the Repealing the *Acts of Parliament* concerning the TEST. Humbly offered to the conſideration of the *Members* of *both Houſes*, at their next Meeting on the 28th of *April* 1687.

IF the juſt apprehenſions of the *Danger of Popery* gave the Birth to the *two Laws* for the *two Teſts*, the *one* with relation to all *publick Employments* in 73. and the *other* with relation to the *Conſtitution* of our *Parliaments* for the future in 78. the preſent time and conjuncture does not ſeem ſo proper for repealing them; unleſs it can be imagined, that the *danger of Popery* is now ſo much leſs than it was formerly, that we need be no more on our guard againſt it. We had a *King*, when theſe *Laws* were enacted, who as he declared himſelf to be of the *Church of England*, by receiving the *Sacrament* four times a *year* in it, ſo in all his *Speeches* to his *Parliaments*, and in all his *Declarations* to his *Subjects*, he repeated the aſſurances of his firmneſs to the *Proteſtant Religion* ſo ſolemnly and frequently, that if the ſaying a thing often gives juſt reaſon to believe it, we had as much reaſon as ever People had to depend upon him: and yet for all that, it was thought neceſſary to fortify thoſe aſſurances with *Laws*: and it is not eaſy to imagin, why we ſhould throw away thoſe, when we have a *Prince* that is not only of another *Religion* himſelf, but that has expreſſed ſo much *ſteadineſs* in it, and ſo much *zeal* for it, that one would think we ſhould rather now ſeek a further *ſecurity*, than throw away that which we already have.

II. *Our King* has given ſuch Teſtimonies of his *Zeal* for his *Religion*, that we ſee among all his other Royal Qualities, there is none for which he deſires and deſerves to be ſo much admired. Since even the paſſion of *Glory*, of making himſelf the terrour of all *Europe*, and the *Arbiter* of *Chriſtendom*, (which as it is natural to all *Princes*, ſo muſt it be moſt particularly ſo to one of his Martial and Noble Temper) yields to his *Zeal* for his *Church*; and that he, in whom we might have hoped to ſee our *Edward* the *third*, or our *Henry* the 5th revived, chooſes rather to merit the heightning his degree of *Glory* in another World, than to acquire all the Lawrels and Conqueſts that this low and vile World can give him: and that, inſtead of making himſelf a terrour to all his Neighbours, he is contented with the *humble Glory* of being a terrour to his own *People*; ſo that inſtead of the great *Figure*, which this *Reign* might make in the *World*, all the *news* of *England* is now only concerning the practiſes on ſome fearful *Mercenaries*.

These things shew, that His Majesty is so possessed with his *Religion*, that this cannot suffer us to think, that there is at present no danger from *Popery*.

III. It does not appear, by what we see, either *abroad* or at *home*, that *Popery* has so changed its nature, that we have less reason to be afraid of it at present, than we had in former times. It might be thought ill nature to go so far back, as to the *Councils of the Lateran*, that decreed *the extirpation of Hereticks*, with severe Sanctions on those *Princes* that failed in their Duty, of being the *Hangmen of the Inquisitors*; or to the *Council of Constance*, that decreed, that *Princes were not bound to keep their faith to Hereticks*; thô it must be acknowledged, that we have extraordinary *Memories* if we can forget such things, and more extraordinary *Understandings* if we do not make some inferences from them. I will not stand upon such inconsiderable Trifles as the *Gunpowder Plot*, or the *Massacre of Ireland*; but I will take the liberty to reflect a little on what *that Church* has done since those *Laws* were made, to give us kinder and softer thoughts of them, and to make us the less apprehensive of them. We see before our eyes what they have done, and are still doing in *France*; and what feeble things *Edicts*, *Coronation Oaths*, *Laws* and *Promises*, repeated over and over again, prove to be, where that *Religion* prevails; and *Louis le Grand* makes not so contemptible a Figure in that *Church*, or in *our Court*, as to make us think, that *his example* may not be proposed as a *Pattern*, as well as his *aid* may be offered for an encouragement, to act the same things in *England*, that he is now doing with so much applause in *France*: and it may be perhaps the rather desired from hence to put him a little in countenance, when so great a *King* as ours is willing to forget himself so far as to copy after him, and to depend upon him: so that as the *Doctrine* and *Principles* of that *Church* must be still the same in all Ages and Places, since its chief pretension is, that it is *infallible*, it is no unreasonable thing for us to be afraid of those, who will be easily induced to *burn* us a little here, when they are told, that such fervent *zeal* will save them a more lasting *burning* hereafter, and will perhaps quit all scores so entirely, that they may hope scarce to endure a *Singing in Purgatory* for all their other Sins.

IV. If the severest *Order* of the *Church of Rome*, that has breathed out nothing but *Fire* and *Blood* since its first formation, and that is even decryed at *Rome* it self for its Violence, is in such credit here; I do not see any enducement from thence to persuade us to look on the *Councils* that are directed by that *Society*, as such harmless and inoffensive things, that we need be no more on our guard against them. I know not why we may not apprehend as much from *Father Petre*, as the *French* have felt from *Pere de la Chaise*, since all the difference that is observed to be between them, *is*, that the *English Jesuite* has much more *Fire* and *Passion*, and much less *Conduct* and *Judgment* than the *French* has. And when *Rome* has expressed so great a Jealousy of the *Interest* that that *Order* had in our *Councils*, that *F. Morgan*, who was thought to influence our *Ambassadour*, was ordered to leave *Rome*, I do not see why *England* should look so tamely on them. No reason can be given why *Card. Howard* should be shut out of all their *Councils*, unless it be, that the *Nobleness* of his Birth, and the *Gentleness* of his Temper,

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are too hard even for his *Religion* and his *Purple*, to be maſtered by them. And it is a Contradiction, that nothing but a Belief capable of receiving *Tranſubſtantiation* can reconcile, to ſee Men pretend to obſerve *Law*, and yet to find at the ſame time an *Ambaſſadour* from *England* at *Rome*, when there are ſo many *Laws* in our *Book of Statutes*, never yet repealed, that have declared over and over again all Commerce with the *Court* and *See* of *Rome* to be *high Treaſon*.

V. The late famous *Judgment* of our *Judges*, who knowing no other way to make their *Names* immortal, have found an effectual one to preſerve them from being ever forgot, ſeems to call for another Method of Proceeding. The *Preſident* they have ſet muſt be fatal either to *them* or *us*. For if 12 *Men*, that get into *Scarlet* and *Furrs*, have an *Authority* to diſſolve all our *Laws*, the *Engliſh Government* is to be hereafter lookt at with as much ſcorn, as it has hitherto drawn admiration. That doubtful VVords of *Laws*, made ſo long ago, that the intention of the *Lawgivers* is not certainly known, muſt be expounded by the *Judges*, is not to be queſtioned: but to infer from thence, that the plain VVords of a *Law*, ſo lately made, and that was ſo vigorouſly aſſerted by the *preſent Parliament*, may be made *void* by a Deciſion of theirs, after ſo much Practice upon them, is juſt as reaſonable a way of arguing, as theirs is, who becauſe the *Church of England* acknowledges, that the *Church* has a Power in *Matters of Rites and Ceremonies*, will from thence conclude, that this Power muſt go ſo far, that thô Chriſt has ſaid of the Cup, *drink ye all of it*, we muſt obey the *Church* when she decrees, that we ſhall not drink of it. *Our Judges*, for the greater part, were *Men* that had paſt their Lives in ſo much *Retirement*, that from thence one might have hoped, that they had ſtudied our *Law* well, ſince the *Bar* had called them ſo ſeldom from their *Studies*: and if *Practice* is thought often hurtful to ſpeculation, as that which diſorders and hurries the Judgment, they who had *practiſed* ſo little in our *Law*, had no byaſs on their Underſtandings: and if the habit of taking *Money* as a *Lawyer* is a dangerous preparation for one that is to be an *incorrupt Judge*, they ſhould have been *incorruptible*, ſince it is not thought, that the greater part of them got ever ſo much *Money* by their *Profeſſion*, as pay'd for their *Furrs*. In ſhort, we now ſee how they have *merited* their *Preferment*, and they may yet expect a further *Exaltation*, when the Juſtice and the *Laws of England* come to be in hands, that will be as careful to preſerve them, as *they* have been to deſtroy them. But what an Infamy will it lay upon the Name of an *Engliſh Parliament*, if inſtead of calling thoſe *Betrayers of their Countrey* to an account, they ſhould go by an after-game to confirm what theſe *Fellows* have done.

VI. The late *Conferences* with ſo many *Members* of *both Houſes*, will give ſuch an ill-natured piece of Jealouſy againſt them, that of all Perſons living, that are the moſt concern'd to take care how they give their *Votes*, the VVorld will believe, that *Threatnings* and *Promiſes* had as large a ſhare in thoſe *ſecret Converſations*, as Reaſoning or Perſuaſion: and it muſt be a more than ordinary degree of Zeal and Courage in them, that muſt take off the Blot, of being *ſent for*, and *ſpoke to*, on ſuch a ſubject and in ſuch a manner. The worthy Behaviour of the *Members* in the *laſt Seſſion*, had made the *Nation* unwilling to remember the Er-

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rors committed in the *first Election*: and it is to be hoped, that they will not give any cauſe for the future to call that to mind For if a *Parliament*, that had ſo many Flaws in its firſt Conception, goes to repeal *Laws*, that we are ſure were made by *Legal Parliaments*, it will put the *Nation* on an Enquiry that nothing but neceſſity will drive them to. For a *Nation* may be laid aſleep, and be a little cheated; but when it is awakned, and ſees its danger, it will not look on and ſee a *Rape* made on its *Religion* aud *Liberties*, without examining, *from whence have theſe Men this Authority?* they will hardly find that it is *of Men*; and they will not believe that it is *of God*. But it is to be hoped, that there will be no occaſion given for this angry queſtion which is much eaſier made than anſwered.

VII. If all that were now asked in favour of *Popery*, were only ſome Gentleneſs towards the *Papiſts*; there were ſome reaſon to entertain the *Debate*, when the Demand were a little more modeſt: If Men were to be attainted of *Treaſon*, for being *reconciled* to the *Church of Rome*, or for *reconciling* others to it; if *Prieſts* were demanded to be *hanged*, for taking Orders in the *Church of Rome*; and if the *two thirds* of the *Papiſts Eſtates* were offered to be *levied*, it were a very natural thing to ſee them uneaſy and reſtleſs: but now the matter is more barefaced; they are not contented to live at eaſe, and enjoy their *Eſtates*; but they muſt carry all before them: and *F. Petre* cannot be at quiet, unleſs he makes as great a *Figure* in *our Court*, as *Pere de la Chaiſe* does at *Verſailles*.

A Ceſſation of all Severities againſt them, is that to which the *Nation* would more eaſily ſubmit; but it is their *Behaviour* that muſt create them the continuance of the like Compaſſion in another *Reign*. If a reſtleſs and a perſecuting *Spirit* were not inherent in that *Order*, that has now the *Aſcendant*, they would have behaved themſelves ſo decently under their preſent Advantages, as to have made *our Divines*, that have charged them ſo heavily, look a little out of countenance: and this would have wrought more on the good Nature of the *Nation*, and the *Princely Nobleneſs* of the *Succeſſors* whom we have in *view*, than thoſe *Arts* of *Craft* and *Violence*, to which we ſee their Tempers carry them even ſo early, before it is yet time to show themſelves. The Temper of the *Engliſh Nation*, the Heroïcal Vertues of *thoſe* whom we have in our Eyes, but above all, our moſt *holy Religion*, which inſtead of Revenge and Cruelty, inſpires us with Charity and Mercy, even for Enemies, are all ſuch things, as may take from the Gentlemen of that *Religion* all ſad apprehenſions, unleſs they raiſe a Storm againſt themſelves, and provoke the *Juſtice of the Nation* to ſuch a degree, that the *Succeſſors* may find it neceſſary to be *juſt*, even when their own Inclinations would rather carry them to *ſhew Mercy*. In short, they need fear nothing but what they create to themſelves: ſo that all this ſtir that they keep for their own *Safety*, looks too like the ſecuring to themſelves *Pardons* for the *Crimes* that they intend to commit.

VIII.

VIII. I know it is objected as no ſmall prejudice againſt theſe *Laws*, that the very making of them diſcovered a particular Malignity againſt *His Majeſty*, and therefore it is *ill Manners* to ſpeak for them. The *firſt* had perhaps an Eye at his being then *Admiral*: and the *laſt* was poſſibly levelled at him: thô when that was diſcovered, he was excepted out of it by a ſpecial *Proviſo*. And as for that which paſt in 73, I hope it is not forgot, that it was enacted by that *Loyal Parliament*, that had ſetled both the *Prerogative* of the Crown and the Rites of the *Church*, and that had given the *King* more *Money* than all the *Parliaments of England* had ever done in all former Times. *A Parliament* that had indeed ſome Diſputes with the *King*, but upon the firſt ſtep that he made with relation to *Religion* or Safety, they ſhewed how ready they were to forget all that was paſt: as appeared by their Behaviour after the *Triple Alliance*. And in 73, thô they had great cauſe given them to diſlike the *Dutch War*, eſpecially the ſtrange beginning of it upon the *Smirna Fleet*: and the *ſtopping* the *Exchequer*, the *Declaration* for *Toleration*, and the *Writs* for the *Members* of the *Houſe*, were Matters of hard Digeſtion; yet no ſooner did the *King* give them this new Aſſurance for their *Religion* then, thô they had very great Reaſons given them to be jealous of the *War*, yet ſince the *King* was engaged, they gave him 1200000 *Pounds* for carrying it on; and they thought they had no ill Penniworths for their *Money*, when they carried home with them to their *Countreys* this new *Security* for their *Religion*, which we are deſired now to throw up, and which the Reverend *Iudges* have already thrown out, as a *Law* out of date. If this had carried in it any new piece of *Severity*, their Complaints might be juſt; but they are extream tender, if they are ſo uneaſy under a *Law* that only gives them Leiſure and Opportunities to live at home. And the laſt *Teſt*, which was intended only for ſhutting them out from a ſhare in the *Legiſlative Body*, appears to be ſo juſt, that one is rather amaſed to find that it was ſo long a *doing*, than that it was *done* at laſt: and ſince it is *done*, it is a great preſumption on our Underſtandings to think, that we ſhould be willing to part with it. If it was not ſooner done, it was becauſe there was not ſuch cauſe given for Jealouſy to work upon: but what has appeared ſince that time, and what has been *printed* in his *late Majeſties* name, ſhews the World now, that the *Iealouſies* which occaſioned thoſe *Laws*, were not ſo ill grounded, as ſome well meaning Men perhaps then believed them to be. But there are ſome times in which all Mens Eyes come to be opened.

IX. I am told, ſome think it is very indecent to have a *Teſt* for our *Parliaments*, in which the *King's Religion* is accuſed of *Idolatry*; but if this reaſon is good in this particular, it will be full as good againſt ſeveral of the *Articles* of our *Church*, and many of the *Homilies*. If the *Church* and *Religion* of this *Nation* is ſo formed by *Law*,

Law, that the *King's Religion* is declared over and over again to be *Idolatrous*, what help is there for it? It is no other, than it was when His Majesty was Crowned, and *Swore* to maintain our *Laws*.

I hope none will be wanting in all possible respect to his sacred Person; and as we ought to be infinitly sorry to find him engaged in a *Religion*, which we must believe *Idolatrous*, so we are far from the ill manners of reflecting on his Person, or calling him an *Idolater*: for as every Man that reports a Lye, is not for that to be called a Lyar; so thô the ordering the Intention, and the prejudice of a misperswasion are such abatements, that we will not rashly take on us to call every Man of the *Church of Rome* an *Idolater*; yet on the other hand, we can never lay down our Charge against the *Church of Rome* as guilty of *Idolatry*, unless at the same time we part with our *Religion*.

X. Others give us a strange sort of *Argument*, to perswade us to part with the *Test*; they say, *the King must imploy his Popish Subjects, for he can trust no other; and he is so assured of their Fidelity to him, that we need apprehend no Danger from them.* This is an odd Method to work on us, to let in a sort of People to the *Parliament* and *Government*, since the *King* cannot trust *us*, but will depend on *them*: so that as soon as this *Law* is repealed, they must have all the Imployments, and have the whole power of the *Nation* lodged in their *hands*; this seems a little too gross to impose, even on *Irishmen*. The *King* saw for many Years together, with how much Zeal both the *Clergy*, and many of the *Gentry* appeared for his Interests; and if there is now a Melancholy Damp on their Spirits, the *King* can dissipate it when he will; and as *the Church of England* is a Body that will never *rebel* against him, so any Sullenness, under which the late Administration of Affairs has brought them, would soon vanish, if the *King* would be pleas'd to remember a little what he has so often *promised*, not only in *Publick* but in *Private*; and would be contented with the Excercise of his own *Religion*, without imbroiling his whole Affairs, because F. *Petre* will have it so: and it tempts Englishmen to more than ordinary degrees of *Rage*, against a sort of *Men*, who it seems, can infuse in a *Prince*, born with the highest sense of Honour possible, Projects, to which without doing some Violence to his own Royal Nature, he could not so much as hearken to, if his *Religion* did not so fatally muzle him up in a blind Obedience. But if we are so unhappy, that *Priests* can so disguise Matters, as to mislead a *Prince*, who without their ill Influences would be the most *Glorious Monarch* of all *Europe*, and would soon reduce the *Grand Louis* to a much humbler *figure*; yet it is not to be so much as imagined, that ever their Arts can be so unhappily successful, as to impose on an *English Parliament*, composed of *Protestant Members*.

FINIS.